

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Representatives Lee Terry (NE-02), Jeff Fortenberry (NE-01), and Tom Osborne (NE-03) today introduced legislation to amend the International Air Transportation Competition Act of 1979, and specifically a provision of the law known as the "Wright Amendment." Terry's bill would allow certain air carriers serving Omaha's Eppley Airfield to provide service for fliers from the greater Omaha area directly to Love Field, Texas .

Currently, the Wright Amendment restricts Southwest Airlines from providing service from just outside Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas . Without access to this air service, travelers from Omaha to the Dallas -Ft. Worth area have a limited choice of carriers, therefore paying much higher prices.

"The Wright Amendment is wrong for Nebraska ," said Terry. "Personally, I do not have much occasion to fly to Dallas , but thousands of my constituents do, and they should have more options both on flights and price to Dallas-Ft. Worth. My bill simply adds Nebraska to a list of states that are now exempt from the Wright Amendment which prohibits Southwest Airlines from flying directly from Love Field to Omaha and many other cities."

Congressman Fortenberry added, "The Wright Amendment is an outdated piece of legislation which decreases competition and keeps Nebraskans from getting the lowest possible airfares," Fortenberry said. "Our neighbors to the east, Missouri, recently received this exemption and prices are now more competitive for flights to Dallas in their state."

Eppley Airfield Director Don Smithey has stated that Southwest could add several daily nonstop flights to Love Field and that airfares to Dallas would drop at least 45 percent. Mr. Smithey has also estimated travelers would save about almost \$20 million annually if fares to Dallas dropped on the route, which is now 84 percent controlled by American and has also said that Omaha 's economy could easily support three Southwest flights to Love Field.

"This is all about competition and giving air travelers from Omaha's Eppley airport more choices and lower prices, especially at a time when high fuel prices are forcing the airlines to raise their fares," said Terry.

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